

CLAIMS

1 1. A method for managing at least one storage device, comprising the steps of:

2 (a) identifying the one storage device;

3 (b) establishing a database containing information about the identified device;

4 (c) providing to the user a graphical user interface in accordance with the information in
5 the database, the graphical interface displaying at least one menu option for the identified device
6 for selection by the user to request at least one of (i) display of information and (ii) execution of
7 at least one process to control the operation of the one storage device;

8 (d) processing the selected menu option; and

9 (e) automatically updating the graphical user interface in response to the processing of the
10 selected menu option.

1 2. The method according to claim 1 wherein the step of identifying the one storage
2 device comprises the step of ascertaining a manufacturer and model number for the one storage
3 device.

1 3. The method according to claim 1 wherein the step of establishing a database
2 comprises the step of obtaining information that includes at least one of (a) operational rules, (b)
3 commands and (c) processing routines of the one storage device.

1 4. The method according to claim 3 wherein the processing step includes
2 determining if the requested execution of the at least one process complies with the
3 operational rules for the identified device, and if not,
4 blocking execution of the at least one process; and
5 generating an error message.

1 5. The method according to claim 1 wherein the step of providing a graphical user
2 interface includes the steps of:

3 displaying icons representative of each identified devices in a hierarchical fashion in a
4 first pane; and

5 displaying information in a second pane related a corresponding one of the icons
6 displayed in a first pane.

-8-

1 6. The method according to claim 1 wherein steps (d) and (e) are repeated following
2 receipt of each subsequent menu selection made by a user.

1 7. Apparatus for managing at least one storage device, comprising:
2 a database containing information about potential storage devices; and
3 a processor coupled to at least one storage device for (a) identifying the one storage
4 device; (b) providing to a user a graphical user interface in accordance with the information in
5 the database, the graphical interface displaying at least one menu option for the identified device
6 for selection by the user to request at least one of (i) display of information and (ii) execution of
7 at least one process to control the operation of the one storage device; (d) processing the selected
8 menu option; and (e) automatically updating the graphical user interface in response to the
9 processing of the selected menu option.

1 8. The apparatus according to claim 7 wherein the processor identifies the one
2 storage device by ascertaining its manufacturer and model number.

1 9. The apparatus according to claim 7 database contains information that includes at
2 least one of (a) operational rules, (b) commands and (c) processing routines of the one storage
3 device.

1 10. The apparatus according to claim 7 wherein the processor process the selected
2 menu option by (a) determining if the requested execution of the at least one process complies
3 with the operational rules for the identified device, and if not, (b) blocking execution of the at
4 least one process; and (c) generating an error message.

1 11. The apparatus according to claim 7 wherein the processor provides the graphical
2 user interface by (a) displaying icons representative of each identified devices in a hierarchical
3 fashion in a first pane; and (b) displaying information in a second pane related a corresponding
4 one of the icons displayed in a first pane.